

REDRESS

Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors

November 2025

JUST REPARATION

Strengthening the community of practice for reparation by sharing topical developments in the field



Just Reparation is a regular roundup of news on reparation, curated by the REDRESS legal team.

This edition covers recent developments in the field of reparation, including the approval of a reparation law by the Bolivian Parliament, updates on claims processed by the Register of Damages Inflicted by Russia's Aggression Against Ukraine, the public apology issued by Colombia for the systematic harassment of a human rights defenders' organisation, allegations of unjustified delays in the payment of reparations to victims of apartheid in South Africa, and a European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) decision on a case of sexual violence.

The edition also features insights from the Latin American Network for Gender-based Strategic Litigation (ReLeG) on a new report highlighting gender-based violence in the context of protests across Latin America.

If you would like to contribute a short article for our *Community Corner* section, or if your organisation is hosting an event that you would like to share with our readers or in our social media, please contact our Legal Officer, Alejandro, at alejandro@redress.org.

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BIG STORIES



BOLIVIA

Senate Approves Law on Integral Reparation for Victims of Constitutional Ruptures

On 30 October 2025, the Chamber of Senators approved the [*Ley de Reparación Integral a las Víctimas de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos Cometidos en Rupturas del Orden Constitucional*](#) (Law on Integral Reparation for Victims of Human Rights Violations Committed during Ruptures of the Constitutional Order). Its approval follows sustained pressure from victims' organisations, including protests and hunger strikes. The bill, now awaiting presidential sanction, establishes a framework for reparation for direct and indirect victims of human rights violations committed between 1 September 2019 and 7 November 2020. This period corresponds to the administration of Jeanine Áñez and seeks to address abuses committed during that time, including [*the Senkata and Sacaba massacres*](#). The bill allows for individual and collective forms of reparation and adopts an inclusive definition of indirect victims, covering people who assisted direct victims during the events.

The bill outlines several categories of reparation. Restitution measures include the release of persons deprived of liberty, efforts to locate victims of enforced disappearance, and the restoration of citizenship rights. Rehabilitation measures provide access to psychosocial and related support services. Satisfaction measures include the repeal of laws incompatible with the Constitution, public apologies by the President, and the naming of public spaces in honour of victims. Guarantees of non-repetition focus on ensuring that criminal proceedings meet international human rights standards. The bill also foresees full compensation for harms suffered.

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UKRAINE

Ukraine's Register of Damages Reaches 67,000 Claims

By the end of October 2025, the Register of Damages Inflicted by Russia's Aggression Against Ukraine ("the Register") reported that at least 22,000 claims and 67,000 applications for war-related losses had been processed. The Register, established in November 2023 through an adopted bill, aims to protect the rights and interests of Ukrainian citizens and prevent further losses resulting from the war. It began accepting applications in April 2024, initially limited to claims for destroyed housing. Since then, it has opened several categories of claims and has received nearly 67,000 applications, including claims for serious personal harm. On 11 November 2025, the Register launched a new category for [loss of housing or residence](#), which includes associated losses of ordinary personal belongings and expenses incurred in securing new accommodation

To be accepted by the Register, a submission must meet three key criteria: the damage must have occurred on the territory of Ukraine; it must have taken place on or after 24 February 2022; and there must be a factual link between

the damage and Russia's aggression. Several claims have been rejected for failing to satisfy one or more of these criteria.

The main method for submitting a claim is online. On 2 April 2024, the Register began operating through [Diia](#), the Ukrainian government's digital application for submitting claims. Once the registration phase is completed, the Register will transmit the collected information and evidence to the Compensation Commission, yet to be established, which will determine eligibility for compensation and the amounts to be awarded.

The Register represents a vital step in documenting and addressing the destruction caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Since its creation in November 2023, it has made notable progress with clear eligibility criteria. Its expansion to more categories and offline could lead to comprehensive recovery and reparation efforts.

Photo by: Kyiv City State Administration CC 2.0

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SOUTH AFRICA

Civil Society Challenges Government Over Long-Delayed Apartheid Reparation Payments

In early November 2025, tensions emerged between the Khulumani Support Group (KSG) and the South African government regarding the distribution of reparation funds to the families of victims killed by apartheid operatives. KSG, which advocates for reparations for apartheid victims, alleged that funds earmarked for victims' families have remained idle in the President's Fund while awaiting action from the Department of Justice (DOJ).

These allegations were raised by KSG's National Director, Marjorie Jobson, who stated that reparations have been stalled for more than 22 years and that "there has been no commitment to making good on reparations despite the large contributions made to the government for this purpose." Jobson further claimed that nearly R2 billion (approximately USD 116 million) in available reparation funds remain undistributed, insisting that the government is effectively withholding the money.

Jobson also highlighted that thousands of apartheid-related cases remain unresolved, arguing that this undermines the credibility of the government and suggests that it "was never wholeheartedly committed to fulfilling the agenda of justice for victims."

In response, the government reiterated that efforts to address apartheid-era reparations are ongoing, and that cases are progressing at various stages within the court system. The DOJ affirmed its commitment to ensuring that reparations are ultimately delivered to eligible victims and their families.

Photo by: Khulumani Support Group

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COLOMBIA

President Issues Public Apology to CAJAR Following Inter-American Court Decision

On 17 October 2025, the State of Colombia publicly apologised for serious human rights violations committed against members of the [Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo \(CAJAR\)](#), a Colombian NGO providing legal defence for victims of human rights abuses. The violations included profiling, persecution, and defamation of CAJAR members and their relatives. President Gustavo Petro delivered the apology and announced that a decree would soon declassify archives from the Administrative Department of Security (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, DAS*), the former State intelligence agency used to monitor and target dissenters, including human rights defenders.

This public apology follows a 2023 ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ([Caso Miembros de la Corporación Colectivo de Abogados "José Alvear Restrepo" vs. Colombia](#)), which examined over 30 years of persecution promoted, tolerated, or perpetrated by the State against CAJAR members. The Court ordered a public apology and declassification of DAS files as measures of satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. These were part of a broader set of reparations, including full compensation, effective investigation and prosecution of those responsible, provision of psychosocial and medical support, official acknowledgement of the violations, production of a documentary on the role of human rights defenders, and a nationwide awareness campaign on their importance.

[Recently](#), CAJAR reported to the Court the continued lack of effective implementation of these measures, stressing the critical importance of non-repetition guarantees in light of the current hostile context for human rights defenders in Colombia.

Photo by: Gustavo Solmott/Pexels

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SPAIN

ECtHR orders Spain to Pay Compensation for Failing to Investigate Sexual Assault by Chemical Submission

On 23 October 2025, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered its judgment in *A.J. and L.E. v. Spain*, finding that Spain violated the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment and the right to private life (Articles 3 and 8 of the European Convention) by failing to carry out an effective investigation into allegations of sexual violence by chemical submission. The Court awarded compensation to the applicants.

The case concerned events in Pamplona in December 2016, when the applicants awoke undressed in a man's home with no memory of the previous night and believed they had been drugged. Police promptly opened an investigation, and the suspects admitted to sexual intercourse, asserting that it had been consensual. However, the authorities failed to preserve, analyse, and secure key forensic evidence. Three criminal investigations were later opened into the loss, manipulation, and mishandling of police evidence, but each was

discontinued on the grounds that intentional wrongdoing could not be established. A parallel internal disciplinary procedure remains pending.

The Court held that the applicants' allegations were sufficiently serious to trigger Spain's procedural obligations under Articles 3 and 8. Although Spain had an adequate legal framework and initially acted with diligence, the subsequent failures in evidence preservation and handling undermined the effectiveness of the investigation.

The ECtHR ordered Spain to pay EUR 20,000 to each applicant for non-pecuniary damage. It dismissed their claim for pecuniary damage due to the absence of a proven causal link with the violation identified and awarded EUR 5,000 jointly for costs and expenses.

Photo by: Antonio Saez / Pexels

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COMMUNITY CORNER

We like to include the perspectives and insights of lawyers, activists, survivors, and others engaged in the field of reparation in **Just Reparation**. Alongside updates on progress in specific cases, your contributions are invaluable for enriching our collective understanding and fostering meaningful dialogue within the reparation community of practice. If you would like to feature in the next edition of Just Reparation, we encourage you to submit your contributions by 10 December 2025 to alejandro@redress.org.

New Report Exposes Sexual Violence as a Tool of Repression in Latin America

by Homa Üsmany & Gabriel J. Ortiz Crespo (RELEG)



A groundbreaking regional study calls for justice and reparations for survivors of protest-related sexual and gender-based violence. The report “*Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Context of Social Protest in Latin America*”, authored by REDRESS, the Academy on Human Rights at American University Washington College of Law, and the Latin America Gender-Based Strategic Litigation Network (RELEG), examines the use of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a method of repression against women and gender-diverse individuals who take part in social protests across Latin America.

Drawing on extensive research and survivor testimonies, it exposes how such violence occurs at multiple stages - during protests, arrests, and detention - and documents patterns of sexual torture, forced nudity, harassment, and reproductive violence. These are not isolated acts but part of a deliberate strategy to silence those who raise their voices in defense of rights and justice.

Taking an intersectional approach, the study highlights the compounded risks faced by Indigenous women, LGBTIQ+ persons, journalists, and human rights defenders. It also finds that justice systems across the region often fail survivors due to delayed, mishandled, or dismissed investigations that lack gender-sensitive procedures.

The authors urge States to recognize sexual violence in protest as a form of torture and to guarantee comprehensive reparations, including medical and psychological care, justice, and non-repetition measures. It also aims to invite judicial operators in countries like Chile to see how torture can occur in unconventional cases that still meet basic legal criteria under international legal instruments.

They further call for closer collaboration with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to ensure the implementation of *Women of Atenco v. Mexico*, a landmark case

that set key standards for protecting women from sexual violence and torture in protest settings.

The report concludes with a call for accountability and structural reform, emphasizing that survivors must be placed at the center of reparation processes to ensure lasting justice and the protection of the right to peaceful protest.

Please read full report [here](#).

OTHER STORIES

UK/ UKRAINE

Abramovich Slams UK Over Delay in Releasing Chelsea Sale Money for Ukraine Aid

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PALESTINE/ ISRAEL

ICJ Orders Israel to Ease Blockade, Guarantee Basic Humanitarian Aid to Gaza

[Read more](#)



UNITED STATES

California will Issue Formal Apology for Its Historical Role in Slavery and Racial Injustice

[Read more](#)



WEEKEND READS

Reparations for the survivors of state hostage-taking

by Carla Ferstman

When survivors of state hostage-taking are eventually released they face a new set of hurdles to adjust back into their communities and resume their lives. This paper explains why reparations are so crucial to the recovery process yet so difficult to achieve in practice. It analyses the legal and procedural impediments which make reparations so challenging in state hostage-taking cases, including state immunity and the limited will of most states of nationality to take up the cases of their nationals after they have been released to the extent required. Drawing some parallels with the efforts to support families of victims of terrorism, it identifies some pathways for improvement. The paper also calls for greater use of survivor-centred approaches when crafting compensation schemes and support structures to meet survivors' needs in both the short and longer-term.

[Read the article](#)



Compensating the Social Harm of Illicit Trade by Social Reuse of Confiscated Assets: Opportunities and Side Constraints

by Lorenzo Bernardini, Karol Bienkowsks, Willem Geelhoed, et. Al.

Various forms of illicit trade, such as drug trafficking, trading in counterfeit products, wildlife trafficking, and cigarette smuggling, can have a significant impact on local communities and cause a deterioration in the living environment, undermine institutional structures, and increase violent conflicts between and within social groups. This social harm is real, albeit difficult to gauge and compensate, as traditional procedures focus on individual perpetrators and victims. This paper addresses a promising response to illicit trades, namely social reuse of confiscated assets. This entails the seizure and confiscation of immovable and movable property for the direct benefit of impacted communities.

[Read the journal](#)

A Missed Opportunity to Redress Franco's Victims of Torture and Other Grave Violations in Spain

by Alejandra Vicente, REDRESS

Our latest blog examines the third anniversary of Spain's Law on Democratic Memory, highlighting ongoing challenges for survivors of torture and other grave violations under Franco's dictatorship. Despite the Law establishing a Prosecutor's



Office to investigate these crimes, over 100 complaints, including recent ones, have been dismissed. Through the story of Carles Vallejo, a survivor now taking his case to the European Court of Human Rights, we explore why justice and reparation remain elusive, and why urgent measures are needed to make the Law an effective remedy for victims.

[Read article](#)

EVENTS

[Here](#) are some upcoming events on strategic litigation against torture and other related topics that may be of interest to you.

REDRESS WEBINAR SERIES

Centring Survivors' Voices in Accountability Processes: Survivor-centred Approach to Documentation

The poster features a background image of a person's hands holding a small orange flower. At the top, logos for the African Center for Justice and Peace Studies, eyeWitness to structural violations, REDRESS, and Syria Justice and Accountability Centre are displayed. The main title is in large, bold, yellow and white text. Below the title, the date and time are specified. A panel of four speakers is listed at the bottom, each with a small circular icon. At the very bottom, a registration link and social media icons are provided.

REDRESS IN PRACTICE WEBINAR SERIES

CENTRING SURVIVORS' VOICES IN ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES: SURVIVOR-CENTRED APPROACH TO DOCUMENTATION

10 DECEMBER 2025 WEDNESDAY | 2:00 TO 3:30 PM CET

PANEL

- **Mohamed Badawi**
Human Rights Officer
African Center for Justice and Peace Studies
- **Emma DiNapoli**
Associate Legal Advisor
eyeWitness to structural violations
- **Katya Ravinskaya**
Legal Officer
REDRESS
- **Roger Lu Phillips**
Legal Director
Syria Justice and Accountability Centre

Arabic, French, Spanish and Ukrainian Interpretations will be available.

Register at <https://bit.ly/REDRESSWEBINAR> | Livestreamed on

The webinar will explore how to apply survivor-centred approach to documentation and accountability processes. Participants will learn key principles for conducting ethical, trauma-informed documentation of human rights violations, including informed consent, safety, confidentiality, meaningful participation, and centring survivors' voices. Drawing on practical examples and lessons learned, the session will highlight strategies for creating documentation practices that uphold survivors' dignity, amplify their perspectives, and strengthen pathways to accountability. It will take place on **10 December 2025 at 2pm CET**.

The panel discussion will be followed by a Q&A session, allowing participants to engage directly with the speakers. Interpretation will be available in Spanish, Ukrainian, Arabic, and French.

[Register here](#)

If your organisation is hosting an event and would like to share it with our community of practice through this newsletter or REDRESS social media, please send the details to our Legal Officer at alejandro@redress.org.
Thank you for reading. See you next month!

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